

DEBUSSY: La Mer  
RAVEL: Daphnis & Chloé, Suite No. 2  
Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra,  
Erich Leinsdorf, Cond.





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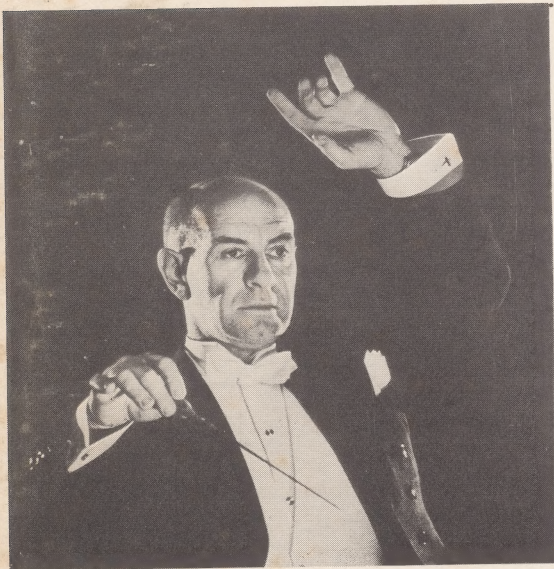
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# DEBUSSY: LA MER RAVEL: DAPHNIS ET CHLOÉ suite No. 2

ERICH LEINS DORF conducting

THE LOS ANGELES PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA



ERICH LEINS DORF was born in Vienna in 1912. At the age of 22 he received his first important conducting engagement as assistant to Bruno Walter in Salzburg. Later on he also became chief assistant to Toscanini in the preparation of the various operas done at the Salzburg Festivals. Since his arrival in the United States in 1938, he has served as the principal conductor of German opera at the Metropolitan Opera in New York City; the conductor and musical director of the Philharmonic Orchestra in Rochester, New York; and the director of the New York City Opera Company. On his numerous tours in this country he has been guest conductor with the San Francisco Opera Association, the NBC Symphony, the Pittsburgh Symphony, the St. Louis Symphony, and the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra. In Europe, he has conducted the London Philharmonic and the Royal Philharmonic, the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, and the Philharmonic Orchestra of Radio Holland. Firmly established as one of today's finest conductors, Mr. Leinsdorf continues to win acclaim both here and abroad for his performances with major opera companies and symphony orchestras.

## DEBUSSY: *La Mer*

Mallarmé said of symbolist poets, "To name an object is to sacrifice three-fourths of that enjoyment which comes from the pleasure of guessing bit by bit. To suggest, that is our aim."

Symbolist-impressionist influences in poetry and painting found fertile ground in Debussy. His response to these influences was quick and natural. It was equally natural, therefore, that he would express himself musically in a similar fashion. This expression reached its climax in *La Mer*, and the work is recognized as Debussy's orchestral masterpiece.

When *La Mer* was first performed in Paris on October 15, 1905, it was not universally acclaimed. One critic said that the work didn't let him "see, hear, or feel the sea."

One need not seek far to find what qualities give Debussy's music the power of communication and the curious ability it somehow has to rise higher than seems possible, considering the means utilized. Debussy had a mind which exhibited a remarkable curiosity, a far-reaching imagination and a classically pure musical taste. These natural endowments not only made him the leader of a new kind of musical movement, they made him that movement's most eloquent spokesman.

His natural aristocracy abhorred the vulgar extravagance of the Liszt, Wagner, Strauss romanticism. His refinement, an inherent part of him, led him to express himself musically with forthrightness, logic, and a unique balance, without excess in any phase except perhaps in refinement itself. He was and is a near perfect example of Gallic temperament and environment—a man who knew what he was about

when he signed himself "musicien français."

*La Mer* is an impressionist canvas in sound. It is a work of mood, of feeling. It conveys one into a sense of the sea as a Monet or a Seurat or a Corot conveys one into the mood and feeling of a stream-side scene, a village, a pond, a model.

The first section, "The Sea from Dawn until Noon," begins with an introduction picturing the quiet sea, followed by a startlingly apt statement of the chief theme by muted trumpet and English horn. Animation succeeds languor, and the movement and sparkle of the ocean are mirrored as day advances.

The middle section, "Play of the Waves," pictures a wide-awake sea with whitecaps running, waves endlessly pursuing each other, endlessly sending spray with the wind.

The final section, "Dialogue of the Wind and the Sea," brings visions in sound of a stormy sea, a sullen sea, a sea infinitely great, infinitely powerful, infinitely irresistible. A feeling of immensity, of awe at nature, is implicit in this music.

In *La Mer* Debussy denies once and for all time the charge that he is exclusively a miniaturist. It is a big work in any sense of the word. It is, moreover, a statement for large orchestra, in which the aesthetics by which Debussy lived was justified in the large scale in which his critics said he could never successfully operate.

## RAVEL: *Daphnis et Chloé*, suite No. 2

*Daphnis et Chloé* is generally considered the finest of French ballets. It was produced just before World War I, when the world was being treated to a seldom equalled outpouring of music. During that period, Richard Strauss,

Mahler, Schoenberg, Stravinsky, Berg, and Bartók among others were creating some of their great works.

Ravel and his colleagues were adding their talents to this flood of great accomplishment, and at the beginning of the second ten years of this century, Paris saw a collaboration unique for its use of the best in French music along with the outstanding talents of the others involved.

The event was the formation of the Ballet Russe in Paris by the great Diaghileff. Organizer, financier, producer, director, martinet, and sometimes despot, he whipped the company he founded into the most brilliant organization of its kind.

For the season of 1911-1912, Ravel was asked to provide music to the Fokine treatment of the *Daphnis and Chloé* legend. Ravel worked slowly and carefully, creating a score which is among his finest, and among the very finest composed for the Diaghileff company.

For the premiere of *Daphnis et Chloé*, Bakst designed his finest sets, Fokine outdid himself in choreography, Nijinsky and Karsavina rehearsed with the company until even Diaghileff was satisfied. The public and critics alike gave the ballet nothing but praise. Every aspect of the production was given a marvellous reception, and the dancers were cheered to the echo. However, in those days for a ballet to have a general popular success, there needed to be some scandal so the public could attack or defend after the fashion of the day. There was no such scandal, so the ballet was given only one other performance that season and was revived without great success the following season. Ravel later arranged the music into two suites for concert performance, and in this form it has become familiar and loved all over the world.

The *Second Suite* begins with an exquisite picture of the coming of the dawn. *Daphnis* lies asleep before the grotto of the nymphs. He awakens as *Chloé* appears, having been saved by the god Pan from the hands of a group of pirates. The music for the reunion of *Daphnis* and *Chloé* is delicate and touching.

An old shepherd recounts the tale of Pan and Syrinx. Pan remembers his own love, and for this reason he has reunited the lovers. As the old man's tale unfolds it is mimed by *Daphnis* and *Chloé*. Following this comes the tumultuous dance that ends the entire ballet.

Shortly before he died, Ravel was leaving a theater after a performance of the music recorded here. He was not many months away from death and he was aware of it. He turned to his companion and said, "I could never write this again. It is beautiful . . . it is beautiful, after all . . ." which is probably the most apt and correct appraisal of this glowing music. It is beautiful after all.



LA MER  
DEBUSSY

side 1

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RAVEL

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